

# THE ANALYSIS OF THE ELEMENTS OF POETRY IN A POEM *SUNFLOWER* BY PAM STEWART

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## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan tentang unsur-unsur intrinsik di dalam puisi yang berjudul *Sunflower* karangan Pam Stewart. Pengarang sengaja memakai unsur intrinsik puisi seperti unsur denotasi dan konotasi, citraan, dan juga majas sebagai daya tarik di dalam puisi ini. Unsur citraan yang dominan di dalam puisi ini adalah citra penglibatan, dan citra gerakan. Selain itu pengarang juga memakai dua buah majas yaitu simile dan personifikasi di dalam puisi ini agar pembaca dapat merasakan puisi tersebut menjadi lebih hidup. Hal yang membuat puisi ini menarik adalah pemakaian majas simile dengan bunga matahari yang ternyata memiliki sebuah sisi gelap yang disembunyikan.*

*Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pam Stewart sengaja memakai unsur citraan dan majas simile untuk memberikan kesan misterius dan indah pada puisi bunga matahari ini.*

**Kata Kunci:** *konotasi, citra, simile, flower, sunflower, seeds.*

## 1. Introduction

Poetry is an expression of art which can be beautiful and deep. Reading a poem is not like reading a book. We have to read it more and more because the more you read it, the better interpretation you will get. A poem is the expression of soul from the author to the readers. Usually when someone falls in love, the idea of expressing his/her love can be as sweet as a candy. When someone falls in love, that person will think about what kind of object to give to his/her lover. Women usually love flowers and poems. This time, the writer wants to analyze a poem about a flower which titled "Sunflower".

"Sunflower" is a poem made by Pam Stewart. This poem talks about a wish of someone who wants to be like a sunflower. The poem itself is not that long. It has only six lines but, there is something deeper and attractive in each of its lines.

In this paper, the writer will analyze the aspects of poetry in this "Sunflower" poem. The writer would like to find out about the author's technique of describing the spring itself and if there is something more than meets the eye.

## 2. Reviewing the Literature

Poetry is a rhythmical composition of words expressing an attitude, designed to surprised and delight, and to arouse an emotional response. (Kennedy, 2005:698) Reading a poem is unlike reading any text. To read a poem, we have to read it with the right reading speed. We can't read a poem too quickly or too slowly because if we read it inappropriately we won't catch the beauties and the feeling of the poem.

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According to Kennedy, there is an objection that poetry should not be studied but merely looked at closely so that we can appreciate it more.

The basic part of a poem is denotation and connotation. Every word has at least one denotation. Denotation is the meaning as defined in the dictionary. Besides that, a word also has a connotation. Connotation is overtones or suggestions of additional meaning that it gains from all the contexts in which we have met in the past. (Kennedy, 2005:776) The word *skeleton* for example by denotation means the bony framework of a human being or other vertebrate animal, which supports the flesh and protect the organs, but by connotation it can suggest thoughts of war, disease and death.

Imagery is a word or sequence of words that refers to any sensory experience. The term image does not only suggest a thing which can be seen, but it may also be a sound, a touch, or even an odor or a taste. (Kennedy, 2005:790) According to Perrine, a good imagery is “an experience and not an information” (Perrine, 1969:55) Imagery is very important to help the readers feel the author’s experience and passion about an object or situation as if they are there inside the poem. There are many kinds of imagery. They are:

- Visual Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of seeing.
- Auditory Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of hearing.
- Olfactory Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of smelling.
- Tactile Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of touching from skin.
- Kinesthetic Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of motion.
- Gustatory Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of tasting.
- Organic Imagery, an imagery that appears from the sense of thinking. (Perrine: 1984: 552-553)

Figurative language is language that cannot be taken literally. As Hamlet said, “I will speak daggers to her, but use none.” It means that hamlet will use the words that are as sharp as dagger. A figure of speech may be said to occur whenever a speaker or writer, for the sake of freshness or emphasis, departs from the usual denotations of words. Figures of speech are not devices to state what is demonstrably untrue. Indeed, they often state truths that more literal language cannot communicate. (Kennedy, 2005:814-815)

“Sunflower” a poem by Pam Stewart, is a short poem. It only has six stanzas. However, it talks about the natural scenery and beauty of the sunflower as if it is a human. This is the reason why the writer feels interested to analyze it.

There are 3 main aspects that will be analyzed. They are:

- Denotation and Connotation
- Imagery
- Figurative Language

### 3. Research Method

In making this research, the writer as a researcher will use two kinds of methods. They are intrinsic method and library research. As we all know, poem or poetry is the most unique form in literature compared with the others such as novel, and drama. Poetry contains a lot of ambiguous words which is why we can’t just read a poem once or twice to fully understand its meaning. That is why the writer uses the

intrinsic method to analyze the elements of literature in poetry. The other method is called Library Research. This research is a method of researching by collecting or acquiring data and information about the object of research from books in library or via internet and any other audiovisual devices.

### ***SUNFLOWER***

*If I were a flower..  
I would be a sunflower.  
To always follow the sun,  
Turn my back to darkness,  
Stand proud, tall and straight  
Even with my head full of seeds.*

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1. Denotation and Connotation**

The basic part of a poem is denotation and connotation. As the writer explained in the section of Reviewing the Literature, inside a poem there are usually denotation and connotation. In this poem, the writer found quite a lot of words that use denotation and connotation. The writer found that this poem contains six lines and the total words of thirty two words.

The first word is “flower”. “Flower” in denotation means a part of a plant that produces seeds. However in a poem, flower has many connotations. It can be happiness, love, youth, and beauty. The author uses the “flower” word twice in his poem. The first “flower” word occurred at the first line, while the second occurred at the second line as a specific flower, a sunflower. If calculated correctly, it means that the word flower has occurred in two out of thirty two words in the poem, which means it is six percent out of one hundred percent in the poem. Although it doesn’t occur quite a lot, but the author (Pam Stewart) used it in the first and second line, and also makes it as the title of this poem. The writer concludes that the author wants to emphasize the beauty and happy feelings. Flowers have many shapes and colors. They are very attractive and also express the energy of young life as it will bloom and then wither when the time comes.

The next word is “sunflower”. Sunflower is a specific flower and people believe that each flower is unique and has their own meanings. The most common flower is Rose. Rose is a connotation of passion, love, and desire. Sunflower has its own connotation too. Sunflower is a flower which has bright yellow color and has round petals which shapes like a sun. It makes the impression of light, pride, and power. The author used this sunflower as her expression of pride and beauty.

The next word is “seeds”. Seed in denotation means a part of plant which is used for reproduction. However in a poem, seeds can have many connotations. It can be the energy of a new life, children, young generation, and even the sexual desire. In this poem, the word “seeds” occurred at the sixth line and also the end of the poem. However, there is an interesting part. The lines starts with the word “even”. This word functions as a contradiction between the previous thing and the next thing. The fifth line tells about “stand proud, tall, and straight”, but the next line is “even with my head full of seeds”. These two lines are a comparison about

contradiction. Stand proud describes a positive activity, but the head full of seeds describes a negative activity. The writer concludes that the word “seeds” here means that it is the sexual desire of the narrator. The author used this word to create an effect of climax for the readers. It is the most interesting part from the poem because finally the reader can find the weakness or the dark side of the narrator. That darkness is her sexual desire.

#### 4.2. Imagery

The word image itself often gives a suggestion of mental picture to our mind when we read the words. Imagery itself is also important in poetry. In this poem, the writer found two kinds of imagery. Those are:

##### 4.2.1. Visual Imagery

Visual Imagery is an imagery that appears from the eyesight. Visual imageries found in this poem are:

***I would be a sunflower***, as if we can see that a person changes into a sunflower. (line 2)

***To always follow the sun***, as if we can see the sunflower follow the sun. (line 3)

***Stand proud, tall, and straight***, as if we can see the sunflower stands so tall and straight. (line 5)

The author used three visual imageries in the poem. The effects of these visual imageries are to convince and to enhance the feeling of the poem to the readers about the sunflower itself. Pam Stewart tried to attract the readers into the feeling of seeing a sunflower which can follow the sun and stand tall and straight. These words bring a mood of peaceful and cheerful because the sunflower is a flower which follows a sun. The sun only shines bright during the day and it represents the situation of bright day where everybody is awake and does their daily activities happily. The visual imageries also bring the readers as if they see the sunflower as a confident and happy flower. The feeling of confidence is expressed by the fifth stanza which is “stand proud, tall, and straight”. Someone who stands proud, tall, and straight is a person with full confidence. On the other a person who stands crooked, not straight and shy can be interpreted by other people as a shy or introvert person.

##### 4.2.2. Kinesthetic Imagery

Kinesthetic Imagery is an imagery that appears from the sense of motion. Kinesthetic Imageries found in this poem are:

***To always follow the sun***, as if we can see the sunflower is running or moving toward the sun. (line 3)

***Turn my back to darkness***, as if we can see the sunflower moves its back like a human. (line 4)

***Stand proud, tall, and straight***, as if we can see the sunflower stands and becomes bigger and taller. (line 5)

The author used three kinesthetic imageries in this poem. The first one is the sense of movement from the sunflower to always look for the sun. Following is an activity of going after something. Usually it happens to someone who is looking for a

leader or a guide. In this Here, Stewart took the readers imagination to see and imagine as if the sunflower is looking for the sun and running toward it. We can also see that Stewart used other movement words such as “turn my back” and “stand tall, and straight”. Both of these activities are commonly found in humans. Again, Stewart used these words to multiply the effect of making a sunflower into a human for the readers. By doing this, the reader will feel as if the sunflower is acting like a very sturdy person.

#### 4.3. Figurative Language

The writer found out that there are two figurative languages in the poem “Sunflower”. Those figurative languages are Simile and Personification.

##### 4.3.1. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech which endows animals, ideas, abstractions, inanimate objects with human form, character, or sensibilities. Here are the personifications found in the poem:

***To always follow the sun.*** (line 3)

***Turn my back.*** (line 4)

***Stand proud.*** (line 5)

***My head full of seeds.*** (line 6)

By using the personification, this poem will be more dramatic and realistic for the readers. The first personification is “to always follow the sun”. As we know sunflower is a flower or a plant. Although plant is also a living thing, however a plant can’t do anything as free as other living things such as humans, and animals. A plant can grow bigger and bigger toward up direction, however it can’t move to its left or right freely. In this poem, the sunflower is described as a person who can follow the sun. Follow is an activity of going after something. In this stanza, the sunflower follows the sun. The sun itself moves from east to west. That means if the sunflower can follow the sun, so the sunflower is able to go from east to west too. Stewart used these words to express that sunflower is moving like a person who goes after something, which is the sun. It makes a great impression for the readers as if the sunflower can run freely from east to west to follow the sun.

Next personification is “turn my back”. Again, Pam Stewart used this word to express another human-like ability from the sunflower. “Turning my back”, which usually can only be done by humans and animals, is used to describe sunflower’s movement. In reality, the sunflower doesn’t have a back. But in this poem, the author deliberately used the word “back” to make the sunflower appear as human. This effect makes the readers feel as if the sunflower can move by itself and leaving away from the darkness.

Next personification is “stand proud”. In this stanza, the sunflower is described by the author as if it is a human. It can stand and becomes proud of itself. In reality, the sunflower can stand by itself, tall, and straight. However, it doesn’t have the “proud” feeling because the sunflower doesn’t have feeling. Here, Stewart used the word “proud” to create an effect for the readers. This effect is a hypnotize effect. Actually, a plant doesn’t have feelings like humans, however by combing the word “stand” and “proud”, Stewart is able to make the readers believe as if the

sunflower enjoys itself by standing proudly. Besides that, Stewart also wants to impress the feeling of “confidence” inside the sunflower.

Next personification is “my head full of seeds”. In this last stanza, the sunflower is described by the author as if it has a “head”. However, there is another word which doesn’t connect with the word “head”. That word is “seeds”. Sunflower is a plant. Usually the plant doesn’t have something which is called “head”. Plant can have roots, leaves, flowers, trunks, and fruits, but not a head. Head is a part of the body which only humans and animals have. Inside a head there is brain and thoughts. Inside a fruit, there is a seed. Stewart used these two words as a unique combination or compound word. By doing this, Stewart wanted to create an effect for the readers that the sunflower is like a human. It has a head but the difference is this head is not filled with brain and thought, but it is filled with seeds. It is like making a contradictory point which makes the sunflower becomes unique.

From all of those personifications, the writer concludes that the author used them to make an impression of life and struggle. In this poem, sunflower is associated with human’s personality and behavior. With these personification, the poem will be more attractive and alive as if the readers can experience what the sunflower is feeling and doing.

#### 4.3.2. Simile

Simile is a figurative language which compares two different things, or two similar things, as Abrams said in his book, “a figurative of speech in which one thing is said to be like another thing, or in which two things are compared”. (1971:78) In simile, the comparison usually uses words like, as if, looks like. In this poem, the similes are:

*If I were a flower*, as if it compares the narrator as a human with a flower.  
(line 1)

*I would be a sunflower*, as if it compares the narrator as a human with a sunflower.  
(line 2)

There are two similes in this poem and both of them are comparing the narrator and flower. The first line is the comparison between the narrator and a flower. The writer assumes that the narrator is a human but then there is a question why does he/she compare him/herself to a flower, especially a sunflower. The writer can only interpret that this flower is a symbol of modest and small object, and also that the narrator identifies herself as she. Flower is a delicate, small and beautiful. Usually men used flowers as an object to bring happiness to his girlfriend or any other woman. Men are not associated with flowers because they think that flowers are only for women. Men like to be associated with macho or masculine objects such as sport car, pen, or motorcycle. On the other hand, women like to be associated as delicate yet beautiful objects such as flower, moon, or angel.

The next simile is the comparison between the narrator and the sunflower. From the explanation above, the writer assumed that the narrator identifies herself as she and then she picks a unique flower; a sunflower. Every flower has its own meanings and symbols; for example, a rose. Women who falls in love like to get roses from men and that’s why rose is a symbol of passion and love. Jasmine is a symbol of innocence and purity because of its white color. Sunflower is the symbol of pride, wealth, and ambition. The sunflower is the only flower which moves its big petal

toward the sun direction which represents ambition and struggle toward the light. The bright yellow color of the sunflower also makes it appears majestic as if you are looking at the miniature of sun itself. The writer interprets this simile as the desire of the narrator to express her pride and ambition in her life. She has a goal and she will work her best to get it like a sunflower which always follow the sun.

## 5. Conclusion

Based from the analysis of the poem “Sunflower” by Pam Stewart, the writer concludes that this poem is interesting. At first the readers find the story of a beautiful and proud sunflower, however, at the end of the poem the readers will find the dark side of the narrator. The narrator of the poem identifies itself as a proud, ambitious woman but yet she hides her sexual desire which is big. It is described in the words such as “head full of seeds”.

The author used the elements of poetry well to describe the feeling of the narrator when she identifies herself as a flower. The usage of figurative language such as simile and personification are very strong here. They have good effects to the readers. The readers can feel the characteristics of the sunflower and imagine it.

Besides the usage of the figurative languages, the author also used two imageries. They are visual imagery and kinesthetic imagery. These imageries help the readers to see, feel, and imagine the poem as if it was real. The author chose the words well because it expresses the feeling of visualization.

The writer concludes that Pam Stewart’s style in this poem is the domination usage of the Imagery and Simile and Personification figurative language. Although the poem is short, which has only six lines, it has so detailed and expressive choice of words. With those aspects the author can make the poem becomes so attractive to the readers as if they can see and feel the sunflower growing in front of their eyes.

Last but not least is the hidden climax of the poem. In the fourth line, there is the word “darkness”. The readers will probably try to figure out what does it mean and they might confuse themselves. However, in the end of the poem it can be inferred that the darkness from the narrator is actually the sexual desire inside her mind.

## 6. References

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